Amendments to the Specification are as follows:

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 29 at line 26 and ending page 30 line 15 as follows:

(Amended) However, the third antiferromagnetic layer 31 is preferably formed on the free magnetic layer 28. The third antiferromagnetic layer 31 is a layer necessary for generating an exchange coupling magnetic field having an appropriate magnitude with the free magnetic layer 28 in each side portion C in the front region. As described later in a manufacturing method, in a film forming step, the third antiferromagnetic layer 31 is successively formed on the free magnetic layer 28, and in addition, the second antiferromagnetic layer 33 is formed above each side portion C of the third antiferromagnetic layer 31 in the front region. As a result, the second antiferromagnetic layer 33 and each side portion C of the third antiferromagnetic layer 31 in the front region may be able to ~~serve~~ as an integrated antiferromagnetic layer, and hence an exchange coupling magnetic field having an appropriate magnitude can be generated with each side portion C of the free magnetic layer 28 in the front region.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 33 at line 4 and ending page 33 line 13 as follows:

(Amended) Accordingly, in addition to the end portion 35a of the backfill gap layer 35, since the end portion 32a of the nonmagnetic layer 32 having a ~~thickens~~ thickness of 3 to 10 Å is also provided on each side portion C of the third antiferromagnetic layer 31 in the back region, the distance between each side portion C of the third antiferromagnetic layer 31 in the back region and the second antiferromagnetic layer 33 can be effectively increased. Hence, the exchange coupling magnetic field is appropriately prevented from being generated between each side portion C of the third antiferromagnetic layer 31 in the back region and the free magnetic layer 28.